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ABSTRACT

The Alberta Minster of Education recently announced a major education restructuring plan. Two components of the plan have a significant impact on the roles and responsibilities of various members of the education community--school-based management and school councils. This document contains position statements concerning the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in education. The position statements were derived from the School Act and related regulations and provincial policies and guidelines; the provincial government's school restructuring plan and Alberta Education's Three-Year Business Plan; and the results of a 1994 public-consultation process. The paper is based on the following assumptions: (1) all members of a society have a responsibility to contribute to the education of young people; (2) all roles and responsibilities in education are interrelated; (3) the clarification of roles and responsibilities will strengthen relationships and consequently will improve the quality of education; and (4) positive attitudes and goodwill are as important as legislative and regulatory controls. Following the introduction and background, the document contains 14 key premises and definitions. Roles and responsibilities are then outlined for students, parents, school councils, school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, school and school-jurisdiction staff, the community, and Alberta Education. One figure and an appendix that summarizes the primary and contributory roles for education partners are included. (LMI)

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ALBERTA
EDUCATION

Office of the Minister

December 12, 1994

Doing what's best for Alberta students - this is the reason for appointing an MLA Implementation Team on Roles and Responsibilities in Education. Chaired by Don Tannas, MLA for Highwood, the Team included Jon Havelock, MLA for Calgary Shaw, and Lorne Taylor, MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

The Team held six two-day meetings in Grande Prairie, Stony Plain, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary and Medicine Hat where they listened to students, parents, trustees, superintendents, principals, teachers, other school staff, and community representatives.

The draft position paper on Roles and Responsibilities is based on the public consultation process, the subsequent Synthesis Report released in September, 1994 and recommendations from the MLA Team.

All members of society have a responsibility to contribute to the education of young people, and an important role to play in education. This document emphasizes just how much our various roles and responsibilities are interrelated. By clarifying our roles and responsibilities we can strengthen relationships and consequently improve the quality of education and establish a more accountable education system.

I believe that as much as possible, education decisions should be made at the school level, with the active participation of parents and the community. Local decision making will ensure that what we do in education reflects local priorities within the context of regional and provincial standards and curriculum.

I want to free school systems and schools to tackle problems with solutions that meet the unique needs of their students.

The draft position paper on Roles and Responsibilities in Education is the result of work done by one of the MLA Implementation Teams. The information presented in this document supports work being done by the other MLA Implementation Teams on the Framework for Funding School Boards,

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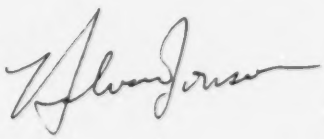
Accountability Framework and Performance Measures, and Business Involvement and Technology Integration.

I wish to thank the members of the MLA Implementation Team, Western Management Consultants and members of Alberta Education who worked on the consultation process, the Synthesis Report and the Position Paper.

The paper is the result of a consultation process involving more than 1500 Albertans who chose to participate through public presentations, invitational workshops, response guide submissions and/or written submissions. It would not have been possible without the views, information and suggestions they provided. I extend a sincere thank you to them all.

Education is changing because society and the world around us are changing and the focus of this change is the student. It is up to all of us to ensure that our students become responsible, self-reliant, caring and contributing members of society.

Sincerely,



Halvar C. Jonson
Minister

Contents

Page #

2 **Introduction**

4 **Background**

6 **Key Premises**

11 **Definitions**

13 **Roles and Responsibilities**

14 • Students
16 • Parents
17 • School Councils
23 • School Boards
25 • Superintendents
27 • Principals
29 • Teachers
31 • School and School Jurisdiction Staff
32 • Community
35 • Alberta Education

36 **Concluding Statement**

37 **References**

37 **For More Information**

38 **Response Sheet**

39 **Appendix A**

Roles and Responsibilities in Education: Summary of Primary and Contributory Roles for Education Partners

Introduction

In an ongoing effort to improve the quality of education for students, Minister of Education Halvar Jonson has announced a major restructuring plan for education in Alberta. Two components of the restructuring plan are having a significant impact on the roles and responsibilities of various members of the education community. These two components are:

1. school-based management, which permits schools and their communities to make many major decisions about programs and policies, and
2. school councils, which give a stronger voice to parents and community members.

This position paper describes in some detail "who will do what" and "who will be responsible for what" when school-based management and school councils have been implemented fully. Clearly, people who deliver education programs directly, as well as those who help and support the education system, will need to modify some of their traditional roles, and give up some of their former responsibilities and take on new ones.

This position paper on roles and responsibilities in education has been developed on the basis of four underlying assumptions:

1. All members of society have a responsibility to contribute to the education of young people, and an important role to play in education.
2. All roles and responsibilities in education are interrelated.
3. Clarifying roles and responsibilities will strengthen relationships and consequently improve the quality of education.
4. In the education community, positive attitudes and goodwill are as important as legislative and regulatory controls.

Each of these basic premises is discussed briefly in the following paragraphs.

All members of society have a responsibility to contribute to the education of young people, and an important role to play in education.

Our society's future well-being depends on our present ability to produce thoughtful, responsible and capable citizens. We need citizens who can think critically and address challenging problems. We need community members who can make a contribution to society and lead successful lives.

Since the best way of achieving these goals is through education, every Albertan has a compelling interest in—and therefore a responsibility for—the education of our young people. An excellent education system provides tremendous benefits for us all.

Parents, teachers, principals and students have a direct, hands-on role to play in education, while business owners and other community members play an important support role. But everyone has a role, and everyone's role is important.

All roles and responsibilities in education are interrelated.

This paper describes the roles and responsibilities of ten participants in the education community: students, parents, school councils, school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, school and school jurisdiction staff, community members and Alberta Education staff. Identifying the participants and defining their roles will help us to clarify "who does what."

Some roles and responsibilities may change, and new roles may emerge. But the highly interdependent nature of the educational endeavour will not change. A seemingly simple decision made by one individual or group can have a significant impact on the efforts of other groups and individuals. Many goals cannot be achieved without the support and hard work of several different groups of people. Therefore, all participants in education must be able to trust in each other's sincerity and good judgement, and constantly maintain open, two-way lines of communication. They must be able to share ideas and work cooperatively, and be ready to receive advice as well as give it.

Because of these interrelationships and interdependencies, there are few situations where one person can decide unilaterally what course of action will be in the best interests of students and their families and communities. Decision making in education involves a constant and complex balancing of the rights of individuals and the rights of the society as a whole. It involves finding a balance between the specialized knowledge and expertise of professional educators and the values and beliefs of the community.

And, decision making in education involves finding a point of agreement among the wishes and needs of various groups of parents, who do not always have the same goals regarding their children's education. The people of Alberta have many different cultural and social backgrounds and diverse skills and experiences. Nonetheless, they are connected to each other by their shared goal of providing the best possible education for all Alberta students.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities will strengthen relationships and consequently improve the quality of education.

All of us need to understand clearly how we fit into the total picture and how we can contribute to positive and effective decision making. Each of us needs to know who is doing what and why.

But the focus is not simply on the extent of involvement and the degree of authority that each individual or group will have. Clarifying specific roles and responsibilities is a means to an end, not an end in itself. This is the central issue:

How can people best work together and share educational resources for the benefit of Alberta students?

In the education community, positive attitudes and good will are as important as legislative and regulatory controls.

Although legislation, regulations, policies and guidelines will direct what different participants do to support and improve education, the key to excellent schools will continue to be our willingness to take a positive approach when challenges arise. Albertans must want to work

together to ensure that every student will have access to an excellent education. As one school board chairman said at a public hearing, "... it is not possible to legislate behaviour, much less legislate excellence."

Background

The positions stated in this paper come from a variety of sources:

- the **School Act** and related regulations, along with Alberta Education's policies and guidelines
- the Alberta government's plan for restructuring the education system and Alberta Education's Three-Year Business Plan
- the results of a 1994 public consultation process on roles and responsibilities in education.

The School Act

Roles and responsibilities in education have been a topic of discussion in Alberta for over ten years. This was an issue in the mid-1980s, during the development of the 1988 **School Act**, and again in 1994, following the government's announcement of a restructuring plan for education.

The 1988 **School Act**, which was drafted after several years of consultation with Albertans, put students at the centre of everything that happens in education. It guaranteed that all students would have access to an education program that meets their learning needs. As well, the legislation gave parents more choices regarding their children's education, including the choice of private schools or home education, and encouraged parents to be actively involved in their children's schools. The role of students and parents in education had never before been so prominently stated in the legislation. Consequently, schools, school boards and the provincial government were challenged to make education more flexible, responsive, accessible and accountable to families and communities.

Restructuring Plan

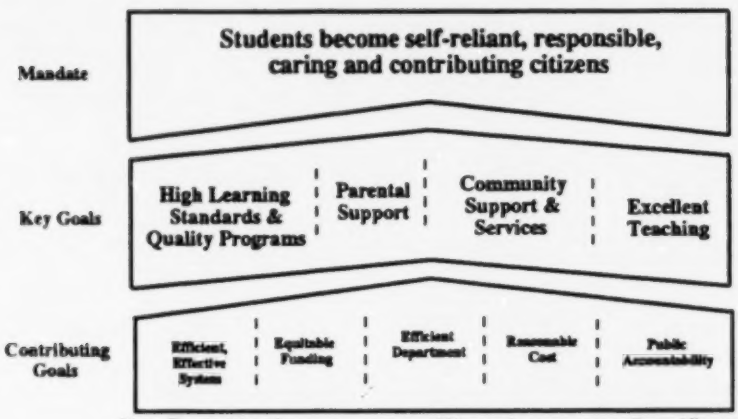
In 1994, the government announced its major restructuring plan for education, and introduced amendments to the **School Act** that would support the plan. Directions for the future included funding education equitably, reducing administrative expenditures, placing a greater emphasis on decision making at the school level and directing more resources to the student in the classroom.

These directions are now being carried out through a variety of initiatives, including:

- providing full funding of education through the provincial government
- deregulating: ensuring a minimum of external controls (by the province on school boards and by the school board on schools)
- implementing school-based management
- giving parents more choices and a stronger voice in the education community

- enabling parents and teachers to have a meaningful role in decisions about policies, programs, budgets and activities
- reducing the number of school boards and the number of staff in Alberta Education
- establishing a more accountable education system where education partners report to the public on the achievement of predetermined performance measures and improvement targets, and selecting actions that result in improvements to the quality of education and its delivery.

Figure 1 - Alberta Government's Plan for Improving Basic Education



Note: Provincial performance measures will be used to report annually to Albertans on student achievement and the performance and cost of the education system.

Planning, Information, and Financial Services Division
Alberta Education

Public Consultation

To facilitate public discussion of current and future changes in roles and responsibilities in education, and to provide the government with input and advice, Education Minister Halvar Jonson appointed an MLA Implementation Team. The team, chaired by Don Tannas, MLA for Highwood, also included Jon Havelock, MLA for Calgary Shaw and Lorne Taylor, MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

In the spring of 1994, the Implementation Team held six two-day meetings, in Grand Prairie, Stony Plain, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary and Medicine Hat. The first day of each meeting was open to public presentations, and the second day provided for workshops and small group discussions involving approximately 100 invited representatives of education interest groups. (Of these 100, approximately 60 per cent were either self-nominated or nominated by MLAs, and approximately 40 per cent were nominated by their participating associations.) The majority of those invited were students, parents and members of the general public.

A total of 724 people attended the six meetings, and 501 presentations and/or submissions were received: 395 from individuals and 106 from groups. People were able to submit comments in four different ways: through public presentations, at an invitational workshop, by completing a response guide or through written submission.

Ideas and directions that came out of those discussions have been used extensively in the development of this position paper. For more information about public input, please refer to the report entitled **Roles and Responsibilities in Education: A Synthesis of Public Input**, which is available on request from Alberta Education.

Key Premises and Definitions

KEY PREMISES

The roles and responsibilities described in this position paper are based on the following 14 key premises. Premises 1 through 4 apply to all members of society; premises 5 through 14 express the primary function of each group that participates in education.

1. **The focus of the education system is on students' learning and the basic education of all students. Therefore, roles and responsibilities in education are determined in this context: What will best serve the educational interests of students and help them to become contributing members of society?**

This statement makes it clear that all decisions in education must benefit students. Students must have opportunities to learn so that they will be able to make a contribution to and participate fully in the world in which they live.

This statement also provides a central purpose for and a unified approach to education: the emphasis is on the learning needs of students. Other aspects of child welfare such as health, recreation and social security are also important. However, this paper focuses on learning in schools.

The definition of basic education that Alberta Education has included in its Three-Year Business Plan is as follows:

The schools' first obligation is to provide a solid core program consisting of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Schools have the responsibility to provide instructional programs that ensure students will meet the provincial graduation requirements and are prepared for entry into the workplace or post-secondary studies. As well, schools must ensure that students understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and have the skills and disposition to pursue learning throughout life.

The following are learning expectations that support basic education:

Schools will be accountable for their students' achievement of provincial learning standards including employability skills consistent with workplace requirements.

Schools will provide a variety of learning experiences so that students:

- Can read for information, understanding, and enjoyment;
- Write and speak clearly, accurately and appropriately for the context;
- Use mathematics to solve problems in business, science and daily-life situations;
- Understand the physical world, ecology and the diversity of life;
- Understand the scientific method and societal context of science;
- Know the history and geography of Canada and have a general understanding of world history and geography;
- Understand Canada's political, social and economic systems in a global context;
- Can research an issue thoroughly;
- Know how to work independently and as part of a team;
- Respect the cultural diversity of Canada and appreciate literature and the arts;
- Know the basic requirements of an active, healthful lifestyle;
- Recognize the importance of accepting responsibility for their physical and emotional well-being and appreciate the role of the family and other relationships to that well-being;
- Manage time and other resources needed to complete a task;
- Use computer and communication technologies;
- Demonstrate initiative, leadership, flexibility, and persistence;
- Evaluate their own endeavours and continually strive to improve;
- Have the desire and realize the need for life-long learning.

Schools may also provide the opportunity for students to acquire a second language. When the primary language of instruction is not English, students must be able to demonstrate competence in reading and writing English.

2. Parents, community members and school staff make the key decisions about the education of individual students.

Plans are underway in Alberta to give schools more authority to decide how the learning needs of local students can best be served. This change is based on these two ideas:

- people who are directly involved are likely to be able to make better decisions
- those who are accountable for results need to have authority to make decisions and/or a voice in decision making.

This change in responsibilities will be facilitated through school-based management. School-based management is defined as "the process by which decisions are made at the school level about instructional programs and services, and how funds are allocated to them." School-based management includes the whole school community.

Members of the school community will jointly determine (within regulations and guidelines):

- the type of programs that will be offered at the school
- how available funds will be allocated to meet educational requirements
- how the school's daily operations will be managed.

Individual students will also be involved in making decisions about their own programs, according to their age and level of maturity.

The local school staff are accountable for students' levels of achievement, and parents are responsible for ensuring that their children are ready to learn. The school and community are jointly responsible for using resources effectively.

3. **The roles and responsibilities of individuals are carefully considered within the shared values and beliefs of society.**

Decision makers must try to achieve an appropriate balance among the interests of individuals, the interests of various groups and the interests of the school as a whole.

4. **In an education system, few decisions are made by one person or group alone; all participants in the educational endeavour have a responsibility to work together, cooperate and communicate with each other.**

Everyone needs to know how to (and be willing to) communicate openly, take part, work together and share in the decision-making process. Also, everyone needs to feel encouraged to participate.

In education, an underlying orientation towards and acceptance of participation is as important as the contact between and among people. When people are open to views and willing to discuss and debate both what the goals of a group should be and the best means of achieving agreed-upon goals, the quality of education will improve.

For example, schools can motivate students to achieve when they have the support and affirmation of the community. And communities can realize their aspirations for their children when teachers, principals and the superintendent are responsive to the community's wishes.

Another clear example of the interrelatedness and interdependency of roles and responsibilities is the whole area of services for children and their families, inside the school system and beyond (for example, health care, social assistance and crime prevention). Services in any one of these areas are unlikely to be effective without a considerable amount of coordination among those providing services in the other areas.

5. **Students take on responsibilities, and make choices about their learning and career paths (according to their level of maturity). Students contribute to the positive climate and accomplishments of their school, and prepare themselves to make a positive contribution to their society in the future.**

The degree of decision making that students undertake will vary, according to such factors as their age and maturity, and the wishes of their parents. However, all students are working towards becoming responsible citizens, with the help of their parents and the community as a whole. Students must work hard in school; in the end, how much they learn is up to them.

6. **Parents have a right and a responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children. As well, parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children are ready to learn, and to support them in their learning.**

Parents need to be involved in their children's education. This role includes ensuring that their children are ready to learn, as well as choosing education programs that they feel will best meet their children's learning needs.

Some parents may need assistance in carrying out their parental responsibilities. School and community agencies must be prepared to work with parents and with each other to give children the support and assistance they need to succeed in school.

7. **School councils are responsible to the parents and to the community they serve.**

The school council has a duty to respond to direction from the majority of parents and other community members that the school serves. Policies and plans that the school council puts forward must be fair to all students. The school council must not become a lobbying group that represents only one segment of the community.

8. **School boards have the authority (delegated from the Minister of Education) to deliver education programs that respond to the learning needs of local students, their parents and the community. School boards are responsible for ensuring that all children in their jurisdiction receive a high quality of education.**

School boards, which are accountable to their electorate and to the provincial government, provide a link between local communities and Alberta Education. Boards ensure that schools are following provincially prescribed programs and meeting provincial standards of achievement. They also serve as advocates for local students and their families when special circumstances apply.

9. **Superintendents are the chief executive officers in school jurisdictions, and they serve many leadership and advisory functions. They make most of their decisions through extensive consultation and interaction with other partners in education.**

The superintendent makes decisions in collaboration with the province, the school board, school principals and parents, within the context of local and provincial policies. Effective superintendents provide a tremendous amount of educational leadership at the local level.

10. **The role of the principal is to provide educational leadership and administer the school in consultation with central office staff, teachers, parents, the school council and the community.**

The principal enables teachers to achieve excellence in the classroom and to continue pursuing their own professional development programs. The principal determines staffing needs

and budget priorities, in consultation with teachers in the school. And, the principal plays a key role in maintaining open communication between home and school, and being responsive to the community.

11. The role of the teacher is to enable students to achieve the learning expectations outlined in the provincial Program of Studies by providing instruction and fostering learning.

Teachers have many other roles and duties beyond providing instruction, but they must all be defined and priorized in this context: what activities, inside or outside the classroom, will do the most to help students learn?

12. Other school and school jurisdiction staff (such as clerical, accounting, custodial and student transportation staff) are partners in education, and have a role in making decisions.

All staff in the school or school jurisdiction are members of a team. They all are working together to meet the learning needs of students. The climate or environment that exists in a school or school jurisdiction depends on the efforts and attitudes of all staff. Therefore, everyone on staff has a role to play in making decisions about education programs and policies as well as decisions that directly affect their work.

13. Individuals and groups in the community work together, and with schools, to contribute to student learning.

Community members help schools decide what standards students will be expected to achieve, academically and socially (conduct and discipline). Businesses and other institutions provide work experience sites and other school-community partnerships that encourage students to learn about the world beyond the school.

As well, community groups and agencies work with schools and with each other to provide various kinds of support for children: health care, social services, day care, family counselling, crime prevention, recreation and personal development, and so on. The coordination and delivery of such services for children (which can have a profound impact on the success of schools) has been a subject of discussion in Alberta for several years (both in communities and among provincial government departments).

14. The provincial government defines directions and sets goals for education programs, ensures equity in education financing, sets provincial standards for student achievement and teacher certification, and assesses the results achieved by schools and school boards across the province. Alberta Education ensures that policies are adhered to and takes appropriate action when results are not achieved.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions of terms may be helpful to readers. (These terms are used repeatedly through this paper.)

Communication:

the whole process of interpreting, expressing and negotiating meaning. The definition of communication goes far beyond the mere transmission or exchange of ideas and information. However, providing access to information is the first step in any effective communication process.

Coordination:

working together or cooperating with others

Participation:

taking part or joining in with others

Accountability:

the obligation to answer for the results of assigned and accepted duties and functions

Responsibility:

an assigned and accepted duty or function

Decision Making in Education:

the process used to determine a conclusion or judgement related to a subject and subsequent action related to a topic

In this paper, the role played in decision making is either primary or contributory:

- Primary role - the group (or person) must answer for the results of their decision, and they have control over activities and resources that produce the result.
- Contributory role - the group (or person) provides advice, interpretations and other important support that others use in making decisions.

In education, both "advice receiving" and "advice giving" are important roles.

All School Staff:

the principal, teachers, teacher's aides, secretaries, janitors and all school board employees who work in the school.

School Council:

a formally constituted group made up of parents of students attending the school, the principal, teachers, students (where level of maturity permits) and community members; this group makes decisions about and advises on educational matters at the school level

School-Based Management:

the process by which decisions are made at the school level about instructional programs and services, and how funds are allocated to them; school-based management includes the whole school community

Major Functions in Education

Planning:

determining the mission, goals and intended results for the overall educational endeavour; establishing accountability measures and selecting appropriate strategies for achieving results

Developing and Delivering Programs:

developing curriculum, selecting learning resources, setting curriculum and assessment standards, providing instruction, assigning staff, placing students, evaluating students and programs, choosing instructional methods and organizing for instruction, using technology, coordinating services for children, establishing a positive school climate and many other similar activities

Budgeting and Allocating Resources:

setting a framework for allocating resources; setting a framework for expenditures; recruiting, certifying, supervising, developing and evaluating human resources; managing facilities and equipment

Communication and Community Relations:

providing access to information, encouraging participation, consulting, coordinating, involving groups and individuals in the development of policy, reporting results.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section of the paper describes roles and responsibilities for ten key participants in education:

- students
- parents
- school councils
- school boards
- superintendents
- principals
- teachers
- school and school jurisdiction staff
- community members
- Alberta Education.

The descriptions of roles and responsibilities are organized according to four functions: planning, developing and delivering education programs, budgeting and allocating resources, and communication. These functions are defined in the "Definitions" section of this paper.

Comments about each of the ten key participants are organized under four subheadings: "Key Premise," "Public Input," "Government Position" and "Implications for Action." For example, the discussion of students' roles and responsibilities is organized in this way:

- The key premise about students (#5) is repeated.
- Public input on the roles and responsibilities of students is summarized briefly.
- The government's position on the roles and responsibilities of students is presented. This position has been developed on the basis of current legislation and policy, the government's plan for restructuring education, and public input.

  Within each of these functions, students will make some decisions for themselves ("primary" role). In other cases, students will consult with and provide advice and input to other people who make decisions that affect them ("contributory" role). These roles in decision making are also defined in the "Definitions" section of this paper.

  The roles and responsibilities described for each key participant are also presented in chart form in Appendix A.
- Suggestions are provided regarding actions that different groups can undertake and mechanisms they can put in place to support the government's position on roles and responsibilities of students.

Public Input: Students

Many of the presenters at the public consultations stressed the need for students to begin making more decisions for themselves, in close consultation with their parents. They said that students should take more responsibility for their own learning and success. Many saw a role for the schools in helping students learn about being responsible.

STUDENTS

Key Premise

Students take on responsibilities, and make choices about their learning and career paths (according to their level of maturity). Students contribute to the positive climate and accomplishments of their school, and prepare themselves to make a positive contribution to their society in the future.

Government Position

Most of the roles and responsibilities of students fall within the program area (for example, learning activities and resources, assessment and evaluation of students' progress, student placement, instructional methods, school climate). Students should have opportunities to give advice on these matters to their parents, teachers, the school principal and the school council. Students should also receive advice from these people.

A major responsibility of students is to work hard in school; in the end, how much they learn is up to them. The purpose of students' learning in school is two-fold: to address their personal interests and learning needs, and to prepare them to make a contribution to society.

Schools and communities have a number of opportunities to encourage young people to make decisions about their own learning. Which decisions students are asked to make will depend on their maturity and their ability to handle the responsibilities involved. It will also depend on the wishes of parents, and on the kinds of choices that circumstances will permit.

Students should be able to make choices (usually with their parents) regarding their programs, the schools they will attend, and so on. However, such choices will necessarily be limited in some communities. For example, larger urban areas that have two or more elementary, junior and senior high schools can offer students a choice of schools for their children to attend. Many rural areas have only one school and cannot offer such a choice.

Children in Early Childhood Services through Grade 9. Younger children will have opportunities to select learning activities, in consultation with their teachers, when choices are appropriate and possible. They will also consult with their parents and teachers about which complementary courses they should take. For example, students in grade 7 might enrol in a practical arts course (business education, home economics, industrial arts) if they have discussed it with their parents and they support the students' choices. As well, younger children will often contribute to the decisions that their parents make about which school they will attend.

Students in Senior High School (Grades 10 through 12). Senior high students will indicate their preferences regarding their courses and programs, the language of instruction and career paths. They also will be able to provide advice to the principal about which teachers they would prefer to have, where choices are available.

Senior high school students will usually consult with their parents, principal and teachers in making decisions about which school to attend.

Senior high students will contribute to decisions made by school staff and the school council regarding:

- school rules and policies (for example, discipline, hours of operation)
- evaluation of courses
- evaluation of programs (for example, electives, field trips, alternative course materials).

The primary and contributory roles of students are summarized in Appendix A on page 40.

Implications for Action

To ensure that students make more of their own decisions and take more responsibility, schools and school boards should consider:

- providing mechanisms for receiving student input at various meetings (of the school staff, school councils and/or school boards)
- giving student councils a stronger advisory role, and encouraging students to participate in their student council's activities
- inviting students to offer help, opinions and suggestions regarding school policies and programs, and responding to their input
- clearly stating what students are expected to achieve and how they are expected to behave, and clearly stating the consequences of not meeting those expectations
- offering opportunities for students to become involved in community service.

Students will need encouragement and support, especially if they have seldom been asked to take decision-making roles in the past. Students will need to know that their parents, school staff and others are sincerely open to hearing their ideas and suggestions, and will consider any suggestions carefully. Students will need to know that their input is not only permitted but expected.

These specific activities might help to promote positive student participation: student opinion surveys, having students take part in parent-teacher conferences, and including students' comments in teacher evaluation reports.

A Note About Student Councils

In secondary schools, a number of the decision-making roles of students are carried out through student councils. Student councils work with their staff advisor to make decisions about their own by-laws, finances and methods of operation. They contribute to decisions made by all school staff and the school council about school rules and policies, coordinate and plan extracurricular activities (with all school staff), and decide (with the staff advisor) how they will communicate with the student body.

PARENTS

Key Premise

Parents have a right and a responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children. As well, parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children are ready to learn, and to help them make good academic progress.

Government Position

One of the key responsibilities of parents is to ensure that their children receive an education. It is also generally understood in our society that parents must care for their children and, if at all possible, ensure that they are physically, mentally, socially and emotionally ready to learn.

Beyond these basic responsibilities, however, parents have opportunities to contribute extensively to the quality and success of the education system. Parents, who are their children's first and most important teachers, are therefore encouraged to participate in their children's education programs and help the teachers, principal and school board make decisions about school policy, curriculum and standards of achievement.

Parents provide advice to their children, the school principal and their children's teachers, and receive advice from them.

Parents should also be able to make choices regarding their children's programs, the schools their children will attend, and so on. However, such choices will necessarily be limited by circumstances. For example, larger urban areas that have two or more elementary, junior and senior high schools can offer parents a choice of schools for their children to attend; many rural areas have only one school and cannot offer a choice.

Developing and Delivering Programs

Parents may (but are not required to) express their preferences regarding:

- where their children will attend school (with the principal and teachers)
- what school programs their children will enrol in (this includes choosing the language of instruction), with the principal and teachers, and with the students according to age and level of maturity
- who their children's teachers will be
- the handling of sensitive issues in the classroom (with teachers and principal).

Schools will comply with parental requests when the necessary resources and facilities are available.

Note that students also have a role in making these kinds of decisions. Refer to the section on "Students" for more information.

Parents will work with the principal and the school council to make decisions about the composition, mandate and operations of the school council. See the section on "School Councils" for more information.

The primary and contributory roles of parents are summarized in Appendix A on page 41.

Public Input: Parents

The subject of parental roles and responsibilities was one of the most discussed topics along with the subject of school councils. Parental roles in education are changing rapidly. One assistant superintendent made this comment about changing parental roles: "Alberta is going to have a better school system because of this parental interest, enthusiasm and emotion that's surfacing throughout the province. Educators are going to have to listen long and hard. They're also going to have to make adjustments the likes of which they wouldn't even have considered a few years ago."

Public input indicated that parents want to be meaningfully involved with their children's schools. People tended to define "a meaningful role" as:

- having access to "vehicles" for taking action
- having a guarantee that when advice is given, someone will respond seriously
- having timely access to information they require.

Parents also want to choose the degree to which they will be involved with their children's schools. Albertans generally supported an advisory role for parents regarding the "what" and "how" of the curriculum, and educational standards and outcomes. There was discussion about how parents who have not previously participated in their children's schools will need encouragement and support. They need to feel comfortable in presenting their ideas to "experts" in

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education, and there needs to be an atmosphere of mutual respect among parents and school staff. Parents need to feel that their input is needed and valued.

Implications for Action

To facilitate an active parental role in educational decision making, schools and school boards should consider establishing mechanisms to involve parents in the decision-making process. For example, they could:

- seek out strategies and systems of organization that effectively promote communication between home and school and help parents and school staff to work together (See also the section on "School Councils.")
- make information more accessible and available to parents so they are well informed about issues in education (electronic networks, workshops).

The following specific activities might help to promote parental participation in education: opinion surveys, and workshops, information networks and information packages for parents.

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Public Input: School Councils

During the public consultations, there was more discussion about school councils than about any other topic. Some people said that the current legislation gives most parents and community members a more active role in education than they currently wish (or feel prepared) to undertake. However, presenters said that each community should be able to decide for itself what roles and responsibilities the school council will have. They said that, across the province, the degree of involvement of school councils could range from "no role at all" to "extremely active and playing a hands-on role in daily school operations." There was a significant amount of discussion about ensuring that school councils are representative and democratic. People were concerned that special interest groups could take over the school council and make decisions that were

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Key Premise

School councils are responsible to the parents and to the community they serve.

Definition

A school council is a formally constituted group made up of parents of students attending the school, the principal, teachers, students and community members. This group makes decisions about and advises on educational matters at the school level.

Government Position

School councils will take on different functions in different communities, ranging from a minimal level of involvement to active involvement in shared and collaborative decision making to formulate policies, shape direction, and define goals of the school. The actual role and responsibilities of such a continuum of school councils will be determined by the council, after it has been elected democratically. The school council's role (and its composition) depends on the size and location of the school, and the type of school jurisdiction involved. Each school must have a school council, and the majority of members of a school council must be parents of students enrolled in the school. It is important that the school council be representative and democratic; in other words, responsive to the majority of parents and community members who have a relationship with the school.

The school council's role is to work with and provide advice to the school principal and sometimes to the school board. Their involvement may go beyond fund-raising activities and special events. The school council might have a role in deciding how to give students the greatest possible opportunity to achieve high standards and pursue their individual interests and talents.

not in the best interest of all students in the school. Besides having a fair system for selecting school council members, there will probably be a need for appeal mechanisms when decisions are considered inappropriate. Finally, the public consultations raised the question of guidance for school councils at the beginning. They may need assistance with by-laws and structures, and members may need some training about their roles and how the education system is structured.

School councils may receive advice from students, the school board, the school principal, teachers, school staff, parents and community members.

Within provincial and jurisdiction policies and regulations, school councils ultimately may be responsible for decisions about:

- the school council's internal by-laws
- the school council's finances
- the school council's methods of operation.

Planning

The school council can, at its own discretion, be involved in:

- determining the school's overall mission, philosophy, policies, rules and objectives (with the principal, parents and students).

  The school council has the right to contribute to decisions made by the school board about school jurisdiction policies.

Developing and Delivering Programs

The school council can, at its own discretion, be involved in:

- deciding what type of programs to offer, where options are available (with the principal, teachers, parents and students)
- deciding what extracurricular activities the school will offer (with the principal, teachers, parents and student council)
- determining standards of student conduct and discipline (with the principal, teachers, parents and students).

Budgeting and Allocating Resources

The school council can, at its own discretion, be involved in:

- determining guidelines and principles for the school budget (with the principal and teachers)
- deciding what types of school staff to select and the criteria for selection (with the principal and teachers)
- planning inservice programs for school council members
- managing the school building and setting policy on community use of school facilities (with the principal)

The school council has the right to contribute to decisions made by the school board about:

- criteria for selecting the principal
- selecting the principal.*

Communications and Community Relations

The school council can, at its own discretion, be involved in:

- establishing methods of reporting student achievement results to parents and to the public (with the principal and teacher)
- establishing methods of communicating with the public (with the principal and all school staff)
- promoting the school in the community
- reporting annually to the school board on results achieved by the school council.

"Those roles not adopted by the school council will become the responsibility of the principal and school staff except in the case of "selecting the principal". This responsibility will revert back to the school board.

The primary and contributory roles of school councils are summarized in Appendix A on page 42.

Specific Details About School Councils

Once school council regulations come into effect, school councils will be elected for the 1995-96 school year. Existing school councils will cease to exist once a new school council is elected or on June 30, 1995, whichever occurs first.

Membership

The school council will be composed of:

- a majority of parents/guardians of children attending the school, who are not members of the school staff. Parents/guardians of children attending the school will choose the school council.
- at least one teacher elected by peers
- in a secondary school, at least one student elected by peers
- at least one member from the community, appointed by the school council. The school council will define what the school's "community" is (geography, social and business connections, and so on)
- the principal, as an ex officio member.

Schools may add more representatives to the school council to reflect the overall population of the school. However, the majority of members must always be parents/guardians of children attending the school. If the parents decide to increase the school council membership, the new members must be elected according to the procedures outlined in the regulations.

Procedures

The following procedures will be followed:

- The principal will inform the parents about the school council at an information meeting, to be called annually before the end of the previous school year, or within the first 40 days of the new school year.
- Parent representatives are elected at the annual information meeting which is open to all parents of children in the school.
- To vote, parents must attend the annual information meeting.
- If a school council is not elected at the first meeting (due to lack of parental attendance) the principal must call a second meeting.
- If the required percentage of eligible parents also fails to attend the second annual information meeting, the powers and duties of the school council will revert to the principal, for that year. The principal will then select parents and community members to serve on an advisory committee.
- Teacher and student representatives are elected by their respective peers before the end of the previous school year, or within the first 40 days of the new school year. The principal presides over these elections.
- The first meeting of the school council must be held before the end of the previous school year, or within the first 50 days of the new school year.
- At the first meeting, the school council will elect its chairperson from among parent representatives on the council who are not employed by the school board.
- The school council will designate a vice-chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer among the representatives at the meeting, with the vice-chairperson being a parent.
- At the first meeting, the school council will identify the areas (see pages 18-19) in which they will have primary or contributory roles in decision making.

Term of Office

The term of office for each member of the school council is one year. Members may be re-elected.

Vacancies in Membership

The following procedures will be followed:

- In the event a position becomes vacant, the school council may co-opt a replacement to complete the remainder of the full term of the departing member.

Remuneration

No member of the school council shall receive any remuneration for services rendered for the school council.

School Council Meetings

The following procedures will be followed:

- The school council shall meet at least three times each year at the call of the chairperson.
- The meetings will be held in the school, and the school council will have access to school support services needed for meetings.
- A quorum constitutes the majority of members of the school council.
- If a quorum is not attained after three notices of meeting, the school board may suspend the school council and assign the school council duties to the principal.
- Decisions are made by majority vote of the members. The presiding member (chairperson) shall have the deciding vote in case of a tie vote of the council.
- Parents of children in the school, all school staff and "community members" (as defined by the school council) may attend all or part of school council meetings as observers.

Appeals and Resolution of Conflicts

A school board shall establish an appeal and conflict resolution procedure for the school council.

Duties of the Officers of the School Council

All elected school council members are eligible to become Officers. The Chairperson must be an elected parent/guardian of a child attending the school.

The Chairperson shall:

- convene and preside at all meetings of the school council
- ensure that all decisions of the school council are carried out
- represent the school council to the school board
- prepare and submit an annual report to the school council and the school board
- designate, in his or her absence, the vice-chairperson or some other member of the school council to assume his or her responsibilities.

The Vice-Chairperson shall:

- assist the chairperson in carrying out his or her duties
- assume the responsibilities of the chairperson in the absence of the chairperson
- assume other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the school council.

The Secretary shall:

- take, keep and arrange for the distribution of the minutes of the school council meetings
- look after the correspondence of the school council
- assume other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the school council.

The Treasurer shall:

- ensure that accurate accounts, receipts and disbursements of school council finances are maintained
- prepare and submit an annual financial report to the school council and to the school board
- assume other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the school council.

Duties of Members of the School Council

Members of the school council shall:

- participate in meetings of the school council
- communicate information about the activities of the school council to students, teachers, parents and community members
- communicate regularly with the groups they are representing, with parents and with community members to obtain their views on education and related issues
- perform other duties and responsibilities assigned by the school council.

Financial Support

Financial support for the operation of the school council will be allocated from the school budget to pay for meeting costs, communications, support services, inservice training for school council members and other reasonable costs.

Implications for Action

After the release of the **Roles and Responsibilities in Education: A Position Paper**, the Minister will consider public comment on the section on school councils. Based on public input, regulations on the formation of school councils will be written in the spring of 1995. Amendments to the current **School Act** also may be necessary. New school councils will be formed according to regulations for the 1995-96 school year.

Alberta Education should support inservice activities related to the roles and responsibilities outlined in this section. Funding should be provided through the Initiatives Grant.

School boards will need to:

- develop local policies on the formation of school councils, and the membership, mandate and operations of school councils, within provincial legislation and regulations
- develop appeal and dispute resolution mechanisms relating to school councils
- develop mechanisms for the inservice training of school councils
- provide orientation sessions for everyone in the school and community who wants to understand the role and function of a school council
- ensure that the timelines for budget preparation allow for input from school councils.

Providing information will, as always, be an important factor in the success of any school council. First, school councils must have access to the information they need to make good decisions. Second, the school council will need to ensure that their deliberations are published in the community and that, when necessary, the community has an opportunity to provide feedback before final decisions are made.

Public Input: School Boards

There was strong support for the continued existence of elected school boards. Many saw school boards' roles changing, however, with the introduction of school councils and school-based management. They saw a shift towards broad policy decision making at the board level.

SCHOOL BOARDS

Key Premise

School boards have the authority (delegated from the Minister of Education) to deliver education programs that respond to the learning needs of local students, their parents and the community. School boards are responsible for ensuring that all children in their jurisdiction receive a high quality of education.

Government Position

The provincial government, which has a constitutional responsibility to provide education programs for all children in Alberta, delegates a substantial number of its duties to the school boards. School boards are accountable to the electorate in the region they serve.

School boards make decisions in consultation with superintendents, principals, school councils and Alberta Education. Boards provide advice to Alberta Education and receive advice from the superintendents, principals, school jurisdiction staff, parents, school councils, community members and Alberta Education.

Planning

School boards are ultimately responsible for results, both in terms of student achievement and meeting the expectations of parents and community members. To achieve these objectives, school boards must make plans and develop policies for the jurisdiction as a whole.

Consistent with provincial legislation, policy and guidelines, school boards will:

- establish local policies and procedures as needed for all aspects of operations; for example, school closures, appeal mechanisms, student conduct (with the superintendent, principals and school councils)
- develop an education business plan for the jurisdiction (with the superintendent)
- implement systems for evaluating students, teachers, schools and programs (with the superintendent and principals)
- engage in joint planning with community service providers to meet the learning needs of all children.

Developing and Delivering Programs

School boards will:

- ensure that schools provide an education program for each student that is consistent with the requirements of the **School Act** (with the superintendent)
- ensure that schools adhere to the provincial Program of Studies, while making appropriate modifications to meet local needs (with the superintendent)
- ensure that schools implement a school-based management approach that allows for community involvement and participation in decision making (with principals)

- hear appeals from parents regarding student placement issues and from parents and school councils when they have concerns about other decisions that have been made at the school level
- establish clear measures of student achievement that are linked to provincial standards (with the superintendent)
- approve locally developed courses (with the superintendent).

School boards will have an advisory role (to the Alberta Education) regarding education programs, especially programs intended to improve schools.

Budgeting and Allocating Resources

School boards focus all their resources on student learning. They will:

- budget and account for all funds received, in accordance with the **School Act** and regulations (with the superintendent and secretary-treasurer)
- allocate funds to schools (with the superintendent)
- enter into agreements with other parties about the provision of education services
- recruit, select, employ, assign, contract and dismiss staff, including superintendents, principals and teachers (with the superintendent)
- provide students with transportation to school, in accordance with the **School Act** and regulations
- construct, renovate and maintain school buildings (with Alberta Education)
- set fees.

School boards will work closely with other school boards and with community agencies to coordinate the use of services, facilities, equipment and other resources.

Communications and Community Relations

School boards provide a communications link between local communities and the provincial government. As boards develop policies and implement programs, they must work closely with parents, school councils, local business and community agencies. They must provide information to each of these groups, and receive advice from them.

School boards will:

- report to government, parents and taxpayers on the achievement of students and the performance of the school jurisdiction (education business plan)
- ensure that parents and community members have access to the information they need to make a valid contribution to decision making.

The primary and contributory roles of school boards are summarized in Appendix A on pages 43-44.

Implications for Action

Alberta Education should:

- consider how communication between the provincial government and school boards can be improved

- review and implement the recommendations of the accountability framework implementation team
- support inservice activities related to the roles and responsibilities outlined in this section. Funding should be provided through the Initiatives Grant.

School boards should:

- consider what structures are needed to facilitate communication between the board and school councils.

Efforts should also be made to ensure that people who are elected to school boards have the knowledge they need to make good decisions about education. School boards should review the professional development needs of trustees on a regular basis.

SUPERINTENDENTS

Public Input: Superintendents

There was some discussion about the advantages of having superintendents hired by school boards and/or by Alberta Education. The challenge of finding an appropriate balance between political and educational goals was also mentioned—for example, there could be tension between a board's need to keep expenditures at acceptable levels and the superintendent's wish to deliver a wide range of education programs. Presenters at the public consultations saw the superintendent as a mediator and a link among the many groups and individuals who are involved in education. They stressed that communication and facilitation are among the most important roles that a superintendent plays. Finally, they noted that, with the introduction of school-based management, superintendents will need to delegate some of their

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Key Premise

Superintendents are the chief executive officers and the chief education officers in school jurisdictions, and they serve many leadership and advisory functions. They make most of their decisions through extensive consultation and interaction with other partners in education.

Government Position

The superintendent is hired by the board with the prior approval of the Minister. The board determines the superintendent's role and duties, consistent with section 94 of the **School Act**.

The superintendent works closely with school boards, principals and teachers. There are many situations where all of these groups contribute to decisions that are made by a superintendent. The superintendent provides advice to the school board and receives advice from employees of the jurisdiction (educators and non-educators), students and their parents, school councils and community members.

Planning

The superintendent will contribute to decisions that are made by the school board about:

- the school jurisdiction's vision, philosophy and policies (with school councils and all school staff)
- the school jurisdiction's education plan.

For example, the superintendent often plays a key role in the development of school board policies on student conduct, student placement and student assessment. The superintendent also takes an active role in the board's short and long-term planning activities—regarding education programs, the evaluation of schools and programs, staff deployment, budget priorities, capital projects and other similar matters.

previous duties to the school principal and teachers.

Developing and Delivering Programs

The superintendent will:

- provide jurisdiction-level educational leadership (Superintendents influence the culture of learning, which determines programs, resources and student outcomes.)
- implement education policies established by the Minister
- ensure that board policies are implemented
- work with the school board and employees of the school board to evaluate schools and assess their performance
- ensure students have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister.

Budgeting and Allocating Resources

The superintendent has a responsibility to streamline operations and see that resources are used as effectively as possible, so that students in classrooms have every opportunity to learn.

Superintendents will work closely with the school board to:

- ensure that finances of the board are managed in accordance with the terms or conditions of any grants received under the **School Act** or any other Act
- manage staffing and the deployment of human resources, and determine systems for evaluating teaching staff

As well, the superintendent will:

- allocate resources for professional development of staff (with the school board and principals)
- make final recommendations about permanent teacher certification (to Alberta Education).

Communications and Community Relations

The superintendent provides support to the school board in the area of communications and represents the school board, individual schools and classroom teachers at public meetings, in the media and in many other situations as required by the school board.

The primary and contributory roles of superintendents are summarized in Appendix A on page 45.

Implications for Action

Restructuring of education in Alberta will have a substantial impact on the role of superintendents. Amalgamating smaller school boards into larger regional boards will shift the superintendent's role towards broad policy decision making. Superintendents will continue to provide educational leadership, but school principals and their teaching staff will begin making some of the decisions about program delivery that superintendents have made in the past.

Alberta Education should support inservice activities related to the roles and responsibilities outlined in this section. Funding should be provided through the Initiatives Grant.

Public Input: Principals

At the public consultations, one principal described his job in this way: "An effective principal will attain goals set by the school. Those goals will allow for positive learning experiences for students, positive work experiences for staff and a supportive parent community." Presenters at the consultations spoke about the tension the principal experiences in being ultimately responsible for the school's success and yet needing to use a consultative decision-making approach. There was also concern about the principal's role being too demanding, having to: manage staff, money, and facilities; maintain a vision for the school and a positive climate; communicate with teachers, students, parents, the school council and the community (not to mention the superintendent and the school board); provide leadership and promote a high quality of instruction; evaluate, monitor and discipline; and so on. There was some disagreement about whether the principal should hire staff or simply choose staff from a pool of people that the school board had hired. However, most people agreed that the principal should decide on staff assignments.

PRINCIPALS

Key Premise

The role of the principal is to provide educational leadership and administer the school in consultation with central office staff, teachers, parents and the community.

Government Position

The principal is hired by the board. The board determines the principal's role and duties, in consultation with the school council.

The principal is the key spokesperson for the school and is ultimately accountable for all school activities, student results and meeting the expectations of parents and community members. The principal's most important job is to provide educational leadership.

The principal works closely with the school board, the superintendent, teachers and other school staff, the school council, students and their parents, and the community. In other words, at one time or another the principal works with virtually everyone who has an interest in the quality and type of education being delivered at the school. In many instances, the principal shares the challenge of making wise decisions with one or more of these groups.

The principal provides advice to the school board, the superintendent, teachers, the school council and Alberta Education. The principal receives advice from employees of the jurisdiction (educators and non-educators), students and their parents, the school council and community members.

Planning

The principal will:

- develop the school's philosophy, policies, rules and objectives (with all school staff and the school council)
- work with community service providers and agencies (and with teachers and the school council) to develop plans for meeting the learning needs of all children who attend the school
- provide advice on school jurisdiction policies to the board and the superintendent
- provide advice about provincial standards to Alberta Education
- help school councils determine how they will operate (by-laws, selection of members, etc.).

Developing and Delivering Programs

The principal plays a key role in encouraging and supporting the teachers in the school, who are responsible for helping students learn. A principal should have high expectations of both teachers and students, and should encourage students and teachers to develop high expectations for themselves.

The principal will:

- provide educational leadership in the school

- ensure that appropriate programs are provided and evaluated (with all school staff and the school council)
- ensure that students in the school have opportunities to meet provincial standards and determine student program placements (with students, teachers, the school council and parents)
- supervise the evaluation and advancement of students (with teachers)
- maintain a positive learning environment (with students, all school staff, the school council and parents)
- encourage and assist teachers so that they can apply their expertise and experience effectively for the benefit of students
- suspend or expel students as required
- maintain student records (with teachers).

Budgeting and Allocating Resources

The introduction of school-based management means that principals have a much greater responsibility for managing resources. The bulk of the money to be spent on education will be allocated to schools, and principals and staff will have control over how it is used (in consultation with their staff, the school council and parents). For example, if a school wants the services of a consultant, they purchase those services. The board does not hire consultants that may not be needed by schools.

The principal will:

- direct the management of the school
- develop guidelines and principles for the school budget and the goals and objectives that drive budget priorities (with all school staff and the school council)
- evaluate teachers employed in the school
- select staff
- enable professional development activities for teachers (with teachers)
- maintain a record of professional development activities (with teachers)
- develop policy on community use of school facilities (with school council).

Principals will contribute to decisions that are made by the school board about the selection criteria for superintendents and central office staff.

Communications and Community Relations

The principal spends a considerable amount of time and energy keeping in touch with parents, the school council and community members, and finding ways to coordinate the efforts of all groups in the school community. Principals ensure that their schools are serving students from diverse backgrounds and supporting community values. And, they provide information to parents and community members, about student results and other matters that are of concern to them.

The principal will:

- report school results to the community

- decide how the school will provide information to parents and the public and receive input from these groups (with all school staff and school council).

The primary and contributory roles of principals are summarized in Appendix A on pages 46 - 47.

Implications for Action

School-based management, which is a team effort to improve education, will change the way that school principals do their work. All principals must have excellent communication skills and the ability to facilitate group decision making. Some principals will now need more opportunities to upgrade their skills in these areas.

Everyone that the principal works with (school boards, superintendents, school staff, school councils, parents and others) will need to offer their support as the principal strives to establish collaborative decision-making models.

Alberta Education should support inservice activities related to the roles and responsibilities outlined in this section. Funding should be provided through the Initiatives Grant.

TEACHERS

Public Input: Teachers

Presenters at the public consultations discussed the time and training required to make school-based management succeed. Teachers stand to benefit from being involved in decisions about budgets and the school's administration and organization, but their first responsibility is classroom instruction. There was some discussion at the public consultations about giving teachers a larger role (through their professional association) in the competency review of teachers. The Alberta Teachers' Association could undertake to regulate itself by establishing a teacher competency assessment arm, separate from its teacher welfare function. Issues of particular concern to teachers were the placement of special needs students and interagency cooperation and coordination.

Key Premise

The role of the teacher is to enable students to achieve the learning expectations outlined in the provincial Program of Studies by providing instruction and fostering learning.

Government Position

Teachers are hired by the board. The principal and the board determine the teacher's role and duties. Other roles and responsibilities for teachers are provided under the **School Act**, the **Department of Education Act** and the **Teaching Profession Act**.

Teachers must use their professional knowledge and experience to determine how to deliver instruction to students and evaluate and report students' progress, consistent with provincial legislation and policy, and school board policy. The responsibility for ensuring that students learn is a shared one; parents and students themselves, as well as teachers, have a key role to play in student learning. It is also generally understood that teachers who conduct themselves professionally and demonstrate respect for their students have the right to be respected by their students.

Teachers work closely with the principal, teaching colleagues and other school staff, and students and their parents. In many instances, teachers share the challenge of making wise decisions with one or more of these groups. With the introduction of school-based management, teachers will become more involved in making decisions about a broad range of educational matters or in contributing to the decision-making process in these areas.

Teachers provide advice to the principal, parents and sometimes to school councils and Alberta Education. They receive advice from the principal, parents and the school council, and sometimes from community members.

Planning

Teachers will contribute to the decisions made by others about:

- the school's philosophy, policies, rules and objectives (with the principal, other school staff and the school council)
- plans to meet the learning needs of all children who attend the school (with community service providers and agencies, the principal and other teachers in the school).

Developing and Delivering Programs

Teachers will:

- follow the provincial Program of Studies
- encourage and foster learning in students
- select and implement appropriate instructional methods and resources for students
- regularly assess, record and report students' progress (with students, the principal and other teachers)
- pursue individualized professional development that increases their ability to help students to learn (with the principal).

Teachers will contribute to decisions made by others about:

- maintaining order and discipline, and developing a discipline policy for the school (with the principal, other school staff, parents, the school council and students)
- maintaining student records (with other teachers and the principal).

Teachers will provide advice about:

- provincial standards and curriculum through a variety of channels, including Alberta Education committees, and curriculum and test development projects
- student program placements (to the principal, parents and students).

Budgeting and Allocating Resources

Teachers are not directly responsible for setting budget priorities and managing resources, but they should be involved in helping the school principal, the school council and the school board make decisions about these matters.

Teachers will provide advice about:

- guidelines and principles for developing the school's budget and the deployment of human and financial resources (with the principal, other school staff and the school council)
- the selection of a principal for the school (to the school board and the school council)
- the selection of school staff (with the principal and the school council)
- teacher evaluation methods (with the principal, parents and students)
- professional development programs* (with the principal, and other teachers).

* A teacher is also responsible for maintaining a personal professional development program.

Communications and Community Relations

The teachers' rights to exercise their professional expertise must be balanced with the right of parents and the community to decide what type of education their children will receive. Good communication between the classroom and the home is the key to success in this area.

Teachers have a responsibility to report to and communicate with the parents of children they are teaching. Teachers must also contribute to decisions about the school's methods of communicating with parents and the public (with the principal and the school council).

The primary and contributory roles of teachers are summarized in Appendix A on pages 48 - 49.

Implications for Action

Alberta Education should review the issue of identifying and certifying specific teacher competencies.

Teachers should receive support from other participants in education so that they can concentrate on their primary role of helping children learn. School staff should look at their needs for professional development activities and set priorities in this area.

Teachers need to be encouraged to share in more decisions about policy and how the schools are administered, as well as about curriculum and evaluation standards. Teachers should be encouraged to work with and participate actively in the school council.

Alberta Education should support inservice activities related to the roles and responsibilities outlined in this section. Funding should be provided through the Initiatives Grant.

Public Input: School and School Jurisdiction Staff

Public input indicated that school and school jurisdiction staff should have more opportunities to provide advice and to work as part of the education team. These employees should be seen as integral partners in education.

SCHOOL AND SCHOOL JURISDICTION STAFF

Key Premise

Other school and school jurisdiction staff (such as clerical, accounting, custodial and student transportation staff) are partners in education, and have a role in making decisions.

Government Position

Support staff, paraprofessionals and other staff make decisions in their area of expertise that have an impact on the success of their work and therefore the quality of education that children receive. For example, custodians and bus drivers help to ensure students' health and safety.

School boards also shall appoint a treasurer (or a secretary-treasurer) to assist the school board in the fiscal management of the district or division.

These staff members should also contribute to decisions that are made by others about education programs in general, and about education policies. The climate or environment that exists in a school or school jurisdiction depends on the efforts and attitudes of all staff. Therefore, everyone on staff has a role to play.

School and school jurisdiction staff provide advice to the superintendent, the principal, teachers, other staff and school councils, and receive advice from these same groups.

School staff and school jurisdiction staff will contribute to decisions about specific details of their own job descriptions and the methods that are used to evaluate their performance on the job (with the principal and the superintendent).

School staff and school jurisdiction staff will provide advice to the principal, school board and school council about specific details of budgets for schools and the school board, budget priorities, and the operation of the school and district.

The primary and contributory roles of school and school jurisdiction staff are summarized in Appendix A on page 50.

Implications for Action

School and school jurisdiction staff, like parents and students and many other members of the education community, need to know that their views and ideas will be heard and considered carefully. They need to understand clearly the role they can play in decision making, and how their jobs contribute directly to the progress of students in their school or community. Again, open communication and working closely with all other partners in education are important sources of support for this group.

School boards and schools may need to consider:

- identifying ways in which technical, clerical and support staff can take a more active role in decision making (e.g., effective mechanisms for receiving their input)
- including these staff members in inservice training on teamwork (cooperation and communication skills)
- including these staff members on school councils.

Public Input: Community

Presenters at the public consultations discussed a variety of roles for community members, ranging from providing input to school councils to participating in work experience programs and determining values and standards for the schools.

COMMUNITY

Key Premise

Individuals and groups in the community work together, and with schools, to contribute to student learning.

Government Position

Approximately three-quarters of Albertans do not currently have children in school. Even though these people are not directly involved with the schools, they can have a significant effect on the quality of education that is offered in their community. Probably the primary right of community members is the right to expect that graduates from our schools will be prepared for entry into the workplace and/or post-secondary studies and will be prepared to contribute to the world they live in. Community members also have a right of access to regular information about how well our schools are doing.

Employing organizations of all kinds – businesses, government, not-for-profit agencies – need to provide opportunities for students. The business community has a special responsibility to support education and assist in students' transition between school and the workplace.

An MLA Implementation Team on Business Involvement and Technology Integration, chaired by Denis Herard, MLA for Calgary Egmont, is working to develop recommendations and plans to improve student learning through workplace learning.

Planning

Community members will:

- provide advice about the goals of education and expectations for student achievement in schools (to all school staff, school councils, school boards and Alberta Education)
- articulate community values (to all school staff, school councils and school boards)
- participate on and/or advise the school councils.

Community service providers and agencies will work with the principal and school staff in planning to meet the needs of children.

Developing and Delivering Programs

Community members will:

- advise all school staff about how curricular and extracurricular school activities can be delivered
- work with all school staff, school councils, the school boards and Alberta Education to determine appropriate standards for the schools
- provide opportunities for students to receive course credit through workplace learning.

Budgeting and Allocating Resources

Community members can provide a resource for education that is somewhat intangible and yet a vital component of a positive school environment. Specifically:

- citizens who are connected geographically or in some other way can work together to create a sense of community; that is, to ensure that each person involved, including every child, is known and respected.
- community members, organizations and agencies can work with one another and with schools and school boards to create and maintain a safe, wholesome learning environment for students, both in the community and in schools.
- members of the community can convey their expectation that students will behave appropriately and responsibly, and help students to gain maturity and responsibility by giving them opportunities to serve.

Regarding the more tangible resources, such as funding, staff and buildings, community members can:

- seek to share resources and use them effectively for the benefit of students (with schools and school boards)

- provide advice to the school boards about the building of schools, and school board budgeting (to school boards)
- provide advice to the school principal, and school council about school budgeting.

Communications and Community Relations

Community members can work with the school and school council to determine appropriate communication methods between the school and the community.

The primary and contributory roles of the community are summarized in Appendix A on page 51.

Implications for Action

To facilitate an active role for community members in educational decision making, schools and school boards should consider:

- strengthening the role of school councils and encouraging community members who are not parents to participate
- emphasizing effective communication and seeking out better ways of working together (for example, drawing on the resources of current community agencies such as community leagues and service clubs)
- encouraging school-community partnerships.

Community members, like parents, need to know that their ideas and suggestions will be taken seriously, and they need to know how to go about having their ideas included in the decision-making process. Community members must be aware, as well, of the democratic nature of the process; that is, all suggestions cannot be accepted because other people will disagree with some of them.

In addition to their involvement in electing school boards and school councils, community members could also participate in education programs by: having service clubs and community leagues work more closely with schools, arranging school-business partnerships (mentoring, work experience, career days) and doing volunteer work at the school.

Public Input: Alberta Education

Discussions about all roles and responsibilities repeatedly addressed the difficulties inherent in facilitating communication and cooperation. The discussions about Alberta Education were no exception. People generally support the roles and responsibilities that are currently assigned to the department (leadership, curriculum development, achievement standards, equitable funding). However, they would like to see more shared decision making and more two-way communication with stakeholders.

ALBERTA EDUCATION

Key Premise

The provincial government defines directions and sets goals for education programs, ensures equity in education financing, sets provincial standards for student achievement and teacher certification, and assesses the results achieved by schools and school boards across the province. Alberta Education ensures that policies are adhered to and takes appropriate action when results are not achieved.

Government Position

Alberta Education carries out the provincial government's constitutional responsibility for education under the direction of the Minister of Education. The department administers legislation, regulations and policies relative to governance, funding and delivery of education in the province.

Alberta Education contributes to decisions that are made by school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, school jurisdiction staff, parents, school councils and community members. The department not only advises and directs these groups, but also receives advice from them.

Planning

Alberta Education will:

- effect provincial policy direction, goals, standards and measures with stakeholders
- continue to review and update the Three-Year Business Plan
- work with other departments and agencies to coordinate services for children.

Developing and Delivering Programs

Alberta Education will:

- establish and communicate learning expectations and standards
- develop curriculum standards
- deal with appeals and disputes
- work with other provinces to establish national standards and transferability of programs
- conduct ongoing provincial assessments and evaluate student achievement and the education system (with schools and school boards)
- develop and implement a more accountable education system (with the MLA Implementation Team on Accountability and school boards)
- establish partnerships in education with business and the community, and with other government departments (with the MLA Implementation Team on Business Involvement and Technology Integration and community).

Budgeting and Allocating Resources

Alberta Education will:

- develop three-year budget projections in the Three-Year Business Plan
- implement and maintain legislation
- allocate funds to schools through school boards
- develop and implement equitable funding (with the MLA Implementation Team on the Funding Framework)
- ensure that adequate financial management, comprehensive auditing and reporting procedures are in place
- certificate teachers
- establish plans and priorities for capital projects (with school boards).

Communications and Community Relations

Alberta Education will:

- report to government and the public on the achievement of the goals in the Business Plan
- report to the public about student achievement in general and the overall performance of the education system.

The primary and contributory roles of Alberta Education are summarized in Appendix A on pages 52 - 53.

Implications for Actions

Alberta Education should support inservice activities related to the roles and responsibilities outlined in this section. Funding should be provided through the Initiatives Grant.

Concluding Statement

Current changes in education, particularly the introduction of school-based management and school councils, are having an impact on the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in education. Students, school councils, school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, school and school jurisdiction staff, parents, community members and Alberta Education staff all are taking a fresh look at what they do and with whom they consult when they make decisions.

Some of the most dramatic changes are taking place at our local schools. Parents now have a stronger voice in education, through school councils and as individuals. This means that school principals and other school staff do their jobs in a different way. As well, new roles for the principal and school staff and for parents mean new roles for everyone else (students, community members, superintendents, school boards and Alberta Education), because all activities in education are so closely interrelated and interdependent.

At the same time, many aspects of education are not changing. For example, teachers still have a primary focus on instruction and helping their students learn, and principals still provide educational leadership and administer the school.

In the end, it is important to remember that everything that we do in education has only one goal. The primary business of education is to ensure that students learn the skills and knowledge they need to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing citizens. The moves towards increased decision making at the school level, towards increased input for parents and towards more effective teamwork in education all are supporting only one goal: providing the best possible education for all Alberta students.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Education. **Meeting the Challenge: Three-Year Business Plan, 1994-95 to 1996-97**. 1994.
- Alberta Education. **Response Guide for Use in the Roles and Responsibilities in Education Consultation Process**. 1994.
- Government of Alberta. **Seizing Opportunity: Alberta's New Economic Development Strategy**. 1993.
- Province of Alberta. **School Act**. 1994.
- Western Management Consultants. **Roles and Responsibilities in Education in Alberta: A Synthesis of Public Input**. 1994.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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To comment on this Paper

A response sheet is attached for your use. (see page 38)

RESPONSE SHEET

Position paper on Roles and Responsibilities in Education

Regulations on school councils will be prepared in spring, 1995. Your thoughts, ideas and suggestions on the section on school councils (pages 17 - 22) are most welcome.

Please reply (by mail or fax) before mid-February 1995, to:

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APPENDIX A

Roles and Responsibilities in Education: Summary of Primary and Contributory Roles for Education Partners

Students*

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
ECS - Grade 9 Students Select learning activities and complementary courses		√ With teachers and parents
Select school they will attend		√ With parents
At secondary level, elect a representative to school council	√	
Senior High Students Select courses and programs, and career paths	√	
Select language of instruction	√	
Select teachers		√ With principal and parents
Select school they will attend		√ With parents, principal and teachers
Determine school rules and policies (usually through student council)		√ With all school staff and school council
Evaluate courses and programs		√ With all school staff and school council
Elect a representative to school council	√	
Student Councils Make decisions about student council's internal by-laws, finances and methods of operation		√ With staff advisor
Determine school rules and policies		√ With all school staff and school council
Coordinate and plan extracurricular programs		√ With all school staff
Decide how to communicate with student body		√ With staff advisor

*Students and their parents will be able to make choices as described when choices are available.

Parents*

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Developing and Delivering Programs Select the school their children attend	√ (For ECS - grade 9 children) With principal and teachers	√ (For students in senior high) With student, principal and teachers
Select the program their child will enrol in	√ (For ECS - grade 9 children) With teachers	
Express their preference regarding who their childrens' teachers will be	√ (For ECS - grade 9 children) With principal and teachers	
Determine how sensitive issues will be handled in the classroom		√ With teachers and principal
Determine the composition, mandate and operations of the school council		√ With principal and school council

*Students and their parents will be able to make choices as described when choices are available.

School Councils

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Planning Make decisions about the school council's internal by-laws, finances and methods of operation	√	
Determine the school's overall mission, philosophy, policies, rules and objectives	√ With principal, parents and students	
Provide advice on school jurisdiction policies		√ To school board
Developing and Delivering Programs Decide what type of programs to offer	√ With principal, teachers, parents and students	
Decide what extracurricular activities the school will offer	√ With principal, teachers, parents and student council	
Determine standards of student conduct and discipline	√ With principal, teachers, parents and students	
Budgeting and Allocating Resources Determine guidelines and principles for the school budget	√ With principal and teachers	
Decide what types of staff to hire and the criteria for selection	√ With principal and teachers	
Set criteria for selecting principal		√ With school board
Select principal		√ With school board
Plan inservice programs for school council members	√	
Manage the school building and set policy on community use of facilities	√ With principal	
Communications and Community Relations Establish methods of reporting student achievement results to parents and the public	√ With principal and teachers	
Establish methods of communicating with the public	√ With principal and all school staff	
Promote the school in the community	√	
Report annually to the school board on results achieved by the school council	√	

School Boards

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Planning Establish policies and procedures for jurisdiction	√ With superintendent, principals and school councils	
Develop an education business plan for jurisdiction	√ With superintendent	
Implement systems for evaluating students, teachers, schools and programs	√ With superintendent and principals	
Engage in joint planning with community service providers to meet the learning needs of all students	√ With community agencies	
Developing and Delivering Programs Ensure that schools provide programs required by law	√ With superintendent	
Ensure that schools follow Program of Studies	√ With superintendent	
Ensure that schools implement school-based management	√ With principals	
Hear appeals from parents and school councils	√	
Establish measures of student achievement	√ With superintendent	
Approve locally developed courses	√ With superintendent	
Provide advice about provincial education programs		√ To Alberta Education
Budgeting and Allocating Resources Budget and account for all funds received	√ With superintendent and secretary-treasurer	
Allocate funds to schools	√ With superintendent	
Enter into agreements with other parties about providing education services	√	
Recruit, select, employ, assign, contract and dismiss staff	√ With superintendent	
Provide students with transportation to school	√	
Construct, renovate and maintain school buildings	√ With Alberta Education	
Set fees	√	
Coordinate use of services, facilities, equipment and other resources	√ With other school boards and community agencies	

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School Boards (cont'd)

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Communications and Community Relations Report to government, parents and taxpayers on student achievement and performance of school jurisdiction (education business plan)	√	
Ensure that parents and community members have access to information they need	√	

Superintendents

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Planning Develop and communicate school jurisdiction's vision, philosophy and policies		√ With school board, school councils and all school staff
Develop education plan for jurisdiction		√ With school board
Developing and Delivering Programs Provide jurisdiction-level educational leadership	√	
Ensure that provincial and board policies are implemented	√	
Evaluate schools and assess their performance		√ With school board and other jurisdiction staff
Budgeting and Allocating Resources Ensure that finances of the board are managed appropriately	√ With school board	
Manage staffing and deployment of human resources, and determine systems for evaluating teaching staff	√ With school board	
Allocate resources for professional development of staff		√ With school board and principal
Make final recommendations about permanent teacher certification	√ To Alberta Education	
Communications and Community Relations Provide leadership in the area of communications		√
Represent board, schools and teachers (at public meetings, to the media, etc.)	√	

Principals

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Planning Develop school's philosophy, policies, rules and objectives		√ With all school staff and school council
Develop plans for meeting learning needs of children who attend the school		√ With community service providers and agencies, teachers, and school council
Provide advice on school jurisdiction policies		√ To school board and superintendent
Provide advice on provincial standards		√ To Alberta Education
Determine how school councils will operate (by-laws, selection of members, etc.)		√ With school council
Developing and Delivering Programs Provide educational leadership in the school	√	
Ensure that appropriate programs are provided and evaluated		√ With all school staff and school council
Ensure that students in the school have opportunities to meet provincial standards, and determine student program placements	√ With teachers, parents, students and school council	
Supervise the evaluation and advancement of students	√ With teachers	
Maintain a positive learning environment	√ With all school staff, parents, students and school council	
Encourage and assist teachers	√	
Suspend and expel students as required	√	
Maintain student records		√ With teachers

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Principals (cont'd)

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Budgeting and Allocating Resources Direct the management of the school	√	
Develop guidelines and principles for the school budget and determine goals and objectives that drive budget priorities		√ With all school staff and school council
Evaluate teachers employed in the school	√	
Select staff	√	
Enable professional development for teachers	√ With teachers	
Maintain a record of professional development activities	√ With teachers	
Provide advice on selection criteria for superintendents and central office staff		√ To school board
Develop policy on community use of school facilities	√ With school council	
Communications and Community Relations Report school results to community	√	
Decide how the school will provide information to parents and the public and receive input from these groups		√ With all school staff and school council

Teachers

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Planning Develop school's philosophy, policies, rules and objectives		√ With principal, other school staff and school council
Develop plans to meet the learning needs of all children who attend the school		√ With community service providers and agencies, principal and other teachers
Developing and Delivering Programs Follow provincial Program of Studies	√	
Encourage and foster learning in students	√	
Select and implement instructional methods and resources for students	√	
Regularly assess, record and report students' progress	√ With students, the principal and other teachers	
Pursue individualized professional development that increases ability to help students learn	√ With principal	
Maintain order and discipline and develop a discipline policy for the school		√ With principal, other school staff, parents, school council, students
Maintain student records		√ With other teachers and principal
Determine provincial standards and curriculum		√ With Alberta Education
Provide advice on student program placement		√ To principal, parents and students
Budgeting and Allocating Resources Develop guidelines and principles for the school's budget and the deployment of human and financial resources		√ With principal, other school staff and school council
Provide advice about principal selection		√ To school board and school council
Provide advice about school staff selection		√ With principal and school council
Determine methods used to evaluate teachers		√ With principal, parents and students

continued to next page

Teachers (cont'd)

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Plan professional development programs		√ With principal and other teachers
Communications and Community Relations Report to and communicate with parents of students they are teaching	√	
Plan/select school's methods of communicating with parents and the public		√ With principal and school council

School and School Jurisdiction Staff

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Make decisions in their area of expertise	√	
Provide advice about education programs in general, and about education policies		√ With superintendent, principal, teachers, other staff and school council
Determine specific details of their own job descriptions and methods used to evaluate their work		√ With superintendent and principal
Provide advice about budget priorities and the operation of the school and jurisdiction		√ To school board, principals and school councils

Community

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Planning Provide advice about the goals of education and expectations for student achievement		√ To all school staff, school councils, school boards, and Alberta Education
Articulate community values		√ To all school staff, school councils and school boards
Participate on and/or advise the school councils	√	
Developing and Delivering Programs Provide advice on how curricular and extracurricular programs can be delivered		√ To all school staff
Determine standards for schools		√ With all school staff, school councils, school boards and Alberta Education
Budgeting and Allocating Resources Create and maintain a positive climate or environment for students, in the school and outside of it		√ With schools and school boards
Provide opportunities for students to gain maturity and responsibility		√ With schools and school boards
Share resources and ensure they are used effectively for the benefit of students		√ With schools and school boards
Provide advice on decisions about school board budgeting, including the building of schools		√ To school boards
Provide advice on decisions about school budgeting		√ To principal and school council
Communications and Community Relations Determine appropriate communication methods between school and community		√ With school and school council

Alberta Education

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Planning Effect provincial policy direction, goals, standards and measures	√ With stakeholders	
Continue to review and update the Three-Year Business Plan	√	
Coordinate services for children		√ With other government departments and agencies
Developing and Delivering Programs Establish and communicate learning expectations and standards	√	
Develop curriculum standards	√	
Deal with appeals and disputes	√	
Establish national standards and transferability of programs		√ With other provinces
Conduct ongoing provincial assessments, and evaluate student achievement and the education system	√ With schools and school boards	
Develop and implement a more accountable education system	√ With MLA Implementation Team on Accountability and school boards	
Establish partnerships in education with business and the community and with other government departments	√ With MLA Implementation Team on Business Involvement and Technology Integration and community	
Budgeting and Allocating Resources Develop three-year budget projections in the Business Plan	√	
Implement and maintain legislation	√	
Allocate funds to schools through school boards	√	
Develop and implement equitable funding	√ With MLA Implementation Team on the Funding Framework	

Alberta Education (cont'd)

Functions	Roles	
	Primary	Contributory
Ensure that adequate financial management, auditing and reporting procedures are in place	√	
Certificate teachers	√	
Establish plans and priorities for capital projects	√ With school boards	
Communications and Community Relations Report to government and the public on the achievement of goals in the Business Plan	√	
Report to the public about student achievement in general and the overall performance of the education system	√	